(b) and (c) The saleable steel production in SAIL integrated steel plants has been as follows :

(Unit—million tonnes)

Year	Target	Actual	%age fulfilment	%age growth previous year
1990-91	7.776	7.364	95	4.2
1991-92	7.951	8.028	101	9.0
1992-93	8.216	8.335	101	3.8

The production of saleable steel has not come down and there has been growth over the years. However, the quantum of growth varies from year to year, depending on facilities available and quantity/quality of inputs.

Closure of Mini Steel Plants

199. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of mini steel plants in the country have been lying closed failing to sustain their viability mainly due to change in the Government policy relating to the steel sector ;

(b) whether Government are contemplating any steps to help the closed mini steel plants to resume operation ; and

(c) if so, the details thereof, including contingency evolved, if any, for providing relief/rehabilitation to large number of people rendered unemployed by closure of the plants ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV) : (a) to (c) The performance of mini steel plants has been affected not by any change in Government policy but due to various factors such as demand recession, shortage of power and increase in input costs particularly in international scrap prices. The industry has represented for various reliefs and the proposals made by the industry are under the consideration of Government.

Sponge Iron Industry

200. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) the number of sponge iron units operational in Bihar with details thereof, and what is the capacity of each of such units per annum ;

(b) the number of units out of these units which are coal based and gas based and what was their total production during the last three years ; year-wise details ;

(c) whether it is a fact that the availability of coal in abundance and plenty of raw material make Bihar an ideal state for the development of sponge iron industry ; and

(d) if so, what action Government proposes to take to develop sponge iron industry in Bihar ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV) : (a) and (b) While there is no gas based sponge iron unit in Bihar, at present there is one coal based sponge iron unit of M/s. Bihar Sponge Iron Ltd. having a capacity of 1.5 lakh tonnes per annum in Bihar. The unit which is in production since July, 1989 is located in District Singhbhum, Bihar. Its total production during the last 3 years has been as under :

Year	Production (in lakh tonnes)
1990-91	1.15
1991-92	1.24
1992-93	1.19

(c) and (d) The Sponge Iron Industry is exempted from the requirement of industrial licensing except for certain restricted locations. Government approval for industrial license is therefore not required for establishment of sponge iron units except for the restricted locations (i.e. within 25 Kms. of any city having a population of more than 10 lakh as per the 1991 Census). Entrepreneurs are therefore free to take